

FROM THE BABYLON OF THE WEST

on the sea were the sign of a great victory, and no prince had ever come to Italy without enduring storms and tribulations at sea, if he were afterwards to prove a conqueror, as was shown by the example of Aeneas and King Charles."¹ At length, on December 5, the Pope reached the shores of the Papal States, and landed at the port of Corneto.

At Corneto the Pope stayed for nearly six weeks, to keep Christmas, and to come to terms with the Romans, whom the Florentines were inciting to insurrection. Here he received a characteristic letter from Catherine, written shortly after her return to Siena, exhorting him to constancy, fortitude, and patience, assuring him of the good disposition of the Sienese, urging him to proceed with confidence.² Nevertheless, ill tidings poured in. On December 14, the citadel of Ascoli, from which Gomez Albornoz had escaped in a vain effort to procure reinforcements, was compelled to surrender to the forces of the league. A week later, an attempt to gain back Citta di Castello for the Church failed; Ugucione and Francesco, sons of the Marchese Angelo del Monte Santa Maria, were beheaded; and Benedetto Strozzi and Ristoro Canigiani (a further proof of the solidarity of all parties in Florence for the defence of the Republic) were sent to confirm the city in its friendship with the Commune of Florence, "and with a word from the Eight of the War."³ Bolsena revolted from the Church; and, at the beginning of January, a papal force composed of troops supplied by the Queen of Naples, which had been sent against Viterbo, was completely defeated by Francesco di Vico and the Florentines.⁴

But this was more than counterbalanced by the submission of Rome itself. On December 21, an agreement was made between

¹ Despatch from Cristoforo da Piacenza to Lodovico Gonzaga, dated Rome, December 13, 1376. Pastor, *Acta Inedita*, doc. I.

^a Letter 252 (n).

⁸ *Diario eTAnommo Florentine*, p. 327.

⁴ Luigi delle Vigne, a brother of Fra Raimondo, was one of the Queen's knights who were taken prisoners on this occasion. In Letter 254 (284), to Pietro di Jacomo Tolomei, Catherine begs him to use his influence with the Prefect to get Luigi set free without ransom.